Changing Fate

MoopzVader

Star Wars

Complete

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Changing Fate

MoopzVader

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Summary

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Description:

IT'S FINALLY FINISHED!!! YAY!!! Padmé/Anakin AU story. What if Anakin had found his wife and twins? REVIEW ME!!!

Default Chapter

Disclaimer: Why are you even reading this? You know what I'm going to say! I don't own Star Wars, blah, blah, blah.

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Alderaan's sky was a vivid blue, and the air, if it could be described as a colour, would be a pure white. It flowed through the lungs of Padme Skywalker as she walked along through the rolling meadows with a cold, clear quality unlike any other place in the known galaxy. Carrying her twins with her, both of whom were fast asleep, she settled under a lone tree, grateful for the shade. Looking down at the snoozing toddlers, she felt the corners of her lips tug upwards in a tiny smile. Yes, she knew that this was a risk, if any Imperial agents saw her with children…

But I don't care, not right now. She thought to herself. *Luke is going to be taken away from me soon, and I want to enjoy every second I have with him.* Drawing the said bundle of joy to her, she nuzzled his head softly, kissing the nearly invisible blond hair that he had inherited from his father…

Ani…

Luke woke, opening the deep blue eyes that, when matched with the blond fuzz on his scalp, proclaimed him clearly to be his father's son. Flailing a hand up to touch his mother's face, Luke suddenly looked over at the horizon and let out a little cry, smiling and clapping his hands. Padme frowned at this show, but the frown was from puzzlement, not anger.

"What are you doing, little Luke? Eh?" She tickled him slightly, smiling at his squeals of delight. Leia stirred and looked up at her brother. If the child hadn't been too young to make complex facial expressions, Padme would have sworn to have seen a look of utter annoyance flit across her daughter's small face. Then the expression — if it had ever truly been there — was gone, and she too was squealing in happiness. Padme set them both down and watched them play. She sighed, seeing everything so *nearly* perfect. This was so close to the family Padme had once envisioned; but as close as it was, it was still incomplete. Watching the twins settle down to a good old-fashioned grass-war lifted her spirits, but she felt something at the edge of her conscience, tugging at her attention.

The Force? Padme thought, puzzled at this new feeling. Whatever it was, it obviously was pleasing the twins, as they were both happily bouncing up and down on their pudgy bums. She closed her eyes, as she had seen Anakin do a million times when he needed a better feel of something or another. The silence filled her, broken only by the sighing of the wind. Leia giggled, climbing up on her mommy's lap and snuggling against her. Luke came seconds after, making himself comfortable and falling gently asleep. Padme gave a mental shrug, careful not to wake her sleeping children.

"I guess the picnic's over, kids. Let's go home." She whispered to them, glad that she could spend this time with them. Obi-Wan had wanted to take Luke as soon as he was born,

but Padme hadn't allowed it, she wanted time with her children. Yes, the dangers were great, if Anakin ever found them; the children would be taken to Palpatine, or worse, killed. At least that was what Obi-Wan claimed, Padme didn't think Anakin, in any shape or form, had it in him to kill his own children. She started the walk home.

Later, as she set the twins down in their crib — they couldn't stand being separated, even while they slept. Padme didn't know what they'd do when Obi-Wan took Luke to Tatooine — Padme thought about her husband. She would always consider him her husband, no matter what he did. He had fought Obi-Wan on Sullust, apparently, and both had come out of it injured and weak. Obi-Wan had retreated, and Anakin had barely escaped the planet before the volcano they had been fighting on erupted. She had heard that he had sustained a bunch of little injuries, but nothing serious. Not that she had desperately searched for that information… she really wasn't supposed to.

Oh, well, what can I do? I still love him and I know it!

A knock sounded at the front door, and Padme looked at the chrono in surprise.

Who could be calling this late at night?

Walking to the front door, she checked to make sure she was presentable before she opened the door. If this was some door-to-door salesbeing again… but if it was something important, she had to take it.

She opened the door, making the Rodian outside blink.

She sighed "Please, whatever you're selling, I don't want it. I'm sorry." She closed the door, fighting down the fear that had invaded her mind at the knock. If that had been Obi-Wan…

Another knock sounded at the door, and Padme groaned, rubbing her eyes as she opened the door again, not even bothering to see who was there.

"Listen, I told you I wasn't interested in your products. Don't you have anything better to do?" She was too tired at this point to care that she was rude.

"I'm not selling anything," Padme's eyes snapped open at the voice, "and I'll never have anything better to do then visit my angel."

"Anakin!" Padme gasped, wide eyes taking in the black clothed form of her husband. "I…"

"I was just in the neighborhood, and I thought I'd drop by. May I come in?"

The children! "Uhh, sure. I was just a little surprised, that's all. How…?"

"Obi-Wan told me you were dead, but I had to see for myself. I could sense your presence, Padme. Aren't you glad to see me? You look a little pale." Anakin's smile was amused, but there was a fair amount of hurt behind it. His eyes, though, were the eyes of the deeply betrayed. "What has Obi-Wan told you?"

"That you attacked him, that you tried to kill him, that you…"

“Would kill you if I found you? Is that what he said?” A snarl twisted his lips “You believed that?! How? You know that I love you dearly! Does that mean nothing to you? Do you truly think I would just throw that away?”

Padme felt tears well up in her eyes at the accusations, but stood her ground. “I know that the Anakin I knew wouldn’t, not for anything. But Vader is someone who has done terrible things, and I wasn’t sure about him.”

“We are one and the same, Vader and Skywalker.”

“I don’t understand why you’ve done some of the things you have done, Ani. I can’t pretend I do.”

“I’ve done none of those things to you, have I?”

“But you’ve done them to others! Are you happy with this new life?”

“I would be if you came with me when I leave here tonight.” The words were spoken softly, and the bitterness that had been swimming in Anakin’s blue eyes disappeared, to be replaced with a sad, but intense longing.

“I… is this one of Palpatine’s commands? To bring me to Coruscant?”

“No!” Anakin cried, pain spiraling among the longing in his eyes, and in his voice. “This is not from Palpatine. I want you to come with me, Padme. Please say yes.”

“I —” A whimper came from the other room, just loud enough to be heard.

Anakin frowned “What was that?”

Padme looked at the ground; *I have to tell him, now*. “Do you remember, before you left, on Naboo? That conversation we had?”

“Yes, at the end of it you said you had something to tell me.” His eyes went wide and his mouth hung open “You don’t mean to say…”

Padme nodded slightly, glancing up at him, suddenly very shy. “I tried to tell you, but we were interrupted.”

“I…” He grinned at her slightly, as if unsure “I’m a father?”

She nodded, smiling at him, suddenly *very* glad she had told him. “Would you like to see them?”

“Them?” He raised an eyebrow, still dazed.

“Yes, there were twins.”

“Twins?! I’m a father twice!” He shook his head, then smiled at her, as shy as she had been. “Yes, I would like to see them.”

Padme took his large hand in hers, and led him into the twins’ room. Both Luke and Leia were sitting up, wide-awake and smiling in delight. Padme turned the light on and Anakin beheld the children he had fathered.

Padme led him towards the crib, and Luke stood up, grasping the rails of the crib in one tiny fist and reaching toward his father with the other.

“Hello.” Anakin whispered, totally blown away by this tiny being reaching out to him. He glanced at Padme for permission, then gently picked the child up. Padme picked up the other one, who stared at him with big brown eyes.

“This is Leia,” Padme said quietly, indicating the brown-eyed child, ‘and that’s Luke.’ She smiled at him, sending him mentally head-over-heels. “I think we’re going to have to pry him off of you.”

Anakin laughed softly, looking at his tiny son. “Hello, Luke.” Probing him through the Force, Anakin turned to Padme ‘He’s strong,’ he looked at Leia, “they both are.”

Padme grew scared then, “Ani, you can’t take them to Palpatine, he’ll see them as a threat. Do you want them to die?”

“No! I mean… perhaps he won’t kill them. Perhaps he’ll want to turn them…”

“I won’t allow that. Anakin, they’ll be miserable, like I know you are. Don’t condemn them to that life.”

“I—” A crash came from the front door, startling all in the dwelling. “What in space..?”

“Lord Vader, Padme Skywalker, come out with the children now.”

“Anakin!?” Padme turned to him, whispering furiously “Did you call them?”

“No, I don’t know how… Sith!” He had been searching his robes, and came up with a black pin, nearly invisible against his clothes. “He tracked me!”

“Now do you see?” Padme begged him with her eyes not to turn them in.

“I… yes, I think I do.” He grabbed her arm and led her back to a window set high in the wall. He smiled at her, ‘Ladies first.’ He stroked Leia’s dark hair. “We’ll join you as soon as you’re up.”

Lifting his wife and child up to the sill, he checked to make sure they were secure before jumping up beside them. Silently opening the window, they crawled out.

Darth Vader and his family ran from the Empire.

Changing Fate - part 2

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2

Creeping silently away from the house, Anakin held Luke against his chest. Glancing down, he felt a smile curl his lips.

He's so tiny! But he'll grow to be strong, that much is certain. Almost as if he'd heard his father's inner monologue, Luke turned bright blue eyes on his sire's face, gave a sigh of contentment, and snuggled deeper into the midnight-black robes. Anakin turned inward as he ran, sensing the re-emergence of long-buried emotions such as peace, happiness, and love. One part of his mind, the darker part, tried to force them out, but the presence of his son in his arms was enough to anchor them in his mind.

I never thought anything could be so pure as the love I feel for them… but I can't feel that. The darkness is poisoned by these weak emotions… but are they so weak? I've never felt anything so strong.

Doing a quick scan of the area with the Force, Anakin jammed his heels into the permacrete, causing Luke to cry out in surprise. *Oh, no!* "Pad! Get back here!" He called, loud as he could without alerting their pursuers.

Padme turned back, frowning. "Ani? —" The whine of a blaster bolt cut off the rest of that sentence. Anakin pushed Padme out of its path, then turned his back to the bolt. He absorbed its energy through his back, and he sighed in relief. Anger took over a second later, and he whirled around to face the stormtroopers. They shot stun bolts at his family, but Anakin called on his dark power and turned the bolts around, sending them speeding back to their owners. Troopers fell, arms and legs twitching comically. Anakin sneered, curling his lip, and clenched his hand into a fist. The other troopers, the ones who were still awake, fell to the ground, clutching their throats. Anakin chuckled darkly.

Luke, hearing this cruel sound, began to cry. He sobbed on the black robes, confused and frightened by the change of mood in his sire.

Anakin was brought from the darkness by his son's first lamentation. He shook his head, bewildered, and began to soothe the little one. "It's okay, Luke. You're safe now, everything's alright." Luke quieted, but still whimpered softly. Anakin turned to his wife; "We have to leave, *now*. Do you have transport?"

"Yes, but it'll take awhile to get to where it's hidden." Padme began to grow alarmed at the sudden pallor of her husband's face. "What is it, Ani?"

"Palpatine; he's here. I can't believe they followed me! We have to get to a ship, he wants the children… he may not want to kill them…"

“He will, Ani. Nevertheless, do you remember the Sith Laws? There can be only two. Even if he keeps one of them, he’ll kill the other one, and then he’ll kill you.”

“No, I won’t believe that.” Anakin shook his head in denial, shutting his eyes tight against what he knew was true. Palpatine had given him a chance to be someone important, but in the end, he was just another piece of Tatooine filth. Not good enough to be in any position of authority, always the follower… always the slave.

He shook himself from his thoughts and looked at Padme again, “Where is your ship?”

“In the palace hangar.”

“No good, he’s too close, he’ll catch us before we get there. We’ll have to take my ship, come on.” He took her hand and led her around the corner, glancing around warily. Stalking forward, keeping to the shadows they crept toward the ship.

It was in sight…

It was ten paces away…

It was five paces away…

They sprinted into the Sith Infiltrator — modified, of course. Padme didn’t think that there was ever a ship that Anakin had owned that he hadn’t modified in some way — and Anakin, a hand on his new lightsaber, walked into the cockpit. Palpatine didn’t feel near, and Anakin had hidden their presence well, but there was no sense in taking foolish chances. No one was in the ship with the Skywalkers, and no one had messed around with the ship.

This is far too easy… Anakin thought anxiously as the ship lifted off. Breaking free of the atmosphere, Padme came to sit in the cockpit with him, cocking an eyebrow at the co-pilot seat; or rather, the lack thereof. Anakin smiled and indicated the seats that were slightly behind the pilot’s chair.

“I wasn’t planning on having company in this baby when I designed her, sorry.” He glanced back at her, saw her settle herself in a seat, then asked her, “Where do you want to head off to? And just to tell you, it’s *very* unlikely that we’re not being tracked, so we’ll need to make a couple of pit-stops.”

“Why don’t we make those stops first, then I’ll tell you.” She glanced at the radar and winced. “Heads up, we’ve got company.”

“I know.” Anakin swerved though the hailstorm of TIEs and started blasting away with the cannons. Luke, who he’d placed on the floor when he’d slid into the pilot’s seat, giggled at the feel of acceleration and stood up. Walking over to his father, he tugged on the long pant leg. Anakin looked down briefly, smiling. “What do you think you’re doing, little one?” Luke gurgled in answer to him and climbed up to sit on his father’s lap. He cooed at the unnumbered stars that faced him and tried to push some buttons on the console.

When he was about to push a big red button, Anakin saw him. “You might not want to touch the missile launcher, but you can touch this.” He gently re-directed his hand to rest on a green button. “Go on, Luke, push it.” Anakin told him. Luke giggled and hit the button, sending the ship forward at an incredible speed. Luke screeched with laughter and hit the button again.

Anakin laughed, a warm sound. Glancing back at Padme, he grinned, “You never told me he was such a speed demon!”

Padme smiled, looking around the cockpit. The stick was from a Naboo Starfighter, and apparently allowed for great maneuverability. There were little modifications here and there, making the ship swift and deadly. She shivered; suddenly pitying the Imperial pilots who were called to fly against the Jedi’s Chosen One.

Minutes later it was all over.

The last of the TIEs retreated, hotly pursued by Anakin. Pulling a swift 180-degree turn just outside of tractor range, Anakin shot them back towards space, rapidly punching in co-ordinates and pulling the lever for the ignition of the hyperdrive. Stars blurred and lengthened as the ship fled into the safety of hyperspace.

He rose from his seat, bringing Luke into his arms again. “You’re going to be one hell of a pilot when you grow up, kid.”

“He gets that from his father.” Padme said softly, a sleeping Leia in her arms. Anakin smiled at the compliment and led her out of the cockpit. Padme yawned slightly, covering her mouth with a hand. *What time is it, anyway? I’m going to fall asleep…*

Hearing her thoughts, Anakin turned toward her, “Listen, you’re tired, and so are the kids, why don’t you get some rest? I’ll show you where the cabin is.”

“Cabin?” Padme raised a brow.

“As I said, I wasn’t expecting company when I designed her. So, you and the children take the cabin, and I’ll sleep in the cockpit. There should be enough room in there for the three of you. Is that alright?”

“Sure. Will you be okay?”

“I’ve slept in worse places, trust me. Here,” they entered the small cabin, and Anakin laid his son — who had fallen asleep on his shoulder — on the bed, “we’ll be arriving at Corellia by mid-morning, their time. Goodnight.” He turned to go, but as soon as he was out the door, he was caught by the sleeve.

“Ani,” Padme spoke in low tones, careful not to wake the sleeping children. “I never got to thank you for getting us out of there.”

“It’s all right, don’t worry about it.”

“No, you gave up your new life for this, and I can never express how thankful I am that you’ve done so. I was scared, for a moment that you wouldn’t. That you’d turn us in…”

Anakin hung his head, “Don’t think the thought hadn’t crossed my mind, because it did. But you were right about the Rule of Two; Palpatine would cast me out like that, if someone more powerful came along. I was a fool to think that I was valuable…”

“Ani…” Padme drew close to him, cupped his face with her hand. ‘You are valuable. If not for you, Luke and Leia would be dead now, or condemned to a life of hate. They need you, Ani; they need to know their father. Luke obviously thinks that the galaxy revolves around you, and Leia is more content then I’ve ever seen her. They need your protection and

guidance, and they don't care if you're the Dark Lord over all the known galaxy. All you have to be is Anakin Skywalker, their father. And,' Padme took a deep breath; "I need you, Ani. Gods, I've never felt so vulnerable, but it's the truth! When I thought I'd lost you…" She shut her eyes tight against the tears that were threatening, and ducked her head.

A warm thumb wiped the tears away, and Padme opened her eyes, surprised at his tenderness. After all Obi-Wan had said Anakin had done, deep down, he was still the same boy who'd so earnestly asked her whether she was an angel. She buried her head in his robes and breathed in his scent, releasing her sorrow and fear. After a moment, an obviously shocked Anakin brought up his arms and embraced her. After a moment they parted, each staring at the other.

Padme stood on her tiptoes and kissed his cheek softly, "Goodnight, Ani."

Later that night, asleep in the cockpit, Anakin thrashed in pain and terror.

You think you can hide your family from me forever, slave? You have no clue as to my power…

Leave my family alone! Anakin screamed mentally, desperately trying to wake and escape his master.

You cannot stop me, boy. "Chosen One", indeed. You are pathetic. With every word, agony screamed through Anakin's body. He pushed back, but he was weakened by the unending wave of dark power from his tormentor. He screamed.

Please! Leave me alone! Suddenly Anakin felt something cool on his face, and he burst into wakefulness with a gasp. Breathing deeply, he calmed himself, slowly realising that he was back on his own ship, sprawled out in the pilot's chair. There was a heaviness on his chest, and something patted his face, making him jump, his eyes snapping open. Leia sat on his chest, and Luke was beside his chair, their eyes were wide with fear.

"What are you two doing up?" Anakin shifted, careful not to dislodge Leia. She lay down and snuggled into him, nuzzling closer to the heat his body produced. Luke clambered up as well, burrowing under his father's arm and watching him with big, blue eyes. Cradling one child in each arm, Anakin tried to fall asleep again.

You have no clue as to my power… Anakin shivered at the memory. Feeling Luke squirm under his arm, he opened his eyes. Luke reached out one chubby arm and gently patted Anakin's hair, like one would pat a pet. Anakin smiled at this attempt at reassurance from a child barely two years old.

"Thank you, Luke." And the strange thing was, he meant it. The sense of love, happiness, and contentment emanating from Luke was keeping the Dark at bay. Feeling foolish, but unable to resist the instinct, he quickly bowed his head and brushed his lips against Luke's head. Closing his eyes, feeling slightly less foolish then he thought he would, with a child in each arm, he started to drift off to sleep.

"Da?" Anakin's eyes opened, and he looked at Luke in wonder.

"Did you say something?"

"Da!" Luke grinned, proud of himself after such a feat.

“Did… did you just call me Dad?”

“Da!” Luke looked at him, as if confirming the obvious. He snuggled closer, his head burrowing under Anakin’s chin, into his throat. “Da…” he whispered.

“Goodnight, son.” Anakin finally drifted off, his children asleep beside him.

Changing Fate - part 3

3

Padme woke up alone and cold. She rolled over, trying to remember where she was sleeping. Everything came back to her: Anakin's reappearance, his discovery of the children, their escape from the Imperials together, and finally, her discussion with Anakin. She sighed, wondering what time it was. Suddenly she sat up, panicked.

Where are my children? They were here when I fell asleep…

She got up, striding to the cockpit. Maybe Anakin knew… she stopped dead at the sight before her.

Anakin was sprawled out in the pilot's chair, feet on the console, sound asleep. One twin was under each arm and they were off in dreamland, as well. She had never seen the twins, or Ani, ever look so peaceful. One side of her felt jealousy at the fact that Ani could give the twins this kind of peace, the kind of repose that only a long-absent loved one could cause in the ones who had missed them. But another side — one that quickly caused the former thoughts to be overridden — was only amazed and touched at the whole scene. Anakin, the Dark One, was cuddling with two toddlers. She had seen both sides of him yesterday, while fleeing the Imperial navy. The Dark had taken him when he had felt his family was threatened, and he had killed all who had endangered them, slaughtered them without a second thought. But then, just as quick as it had come, the Dark had receded at the sound of Luke's crying. He had not seemed sorry in any way; rather, he had been confused. The Light had come, then, and he had comforted his son, soothing his fears. Padme crept over, smiling slightly, and gently stroked her husband's blond hair. He stirred, mumbled, and opened his eyes sleepily.

When they fell on her, he smiled. "How long have you been standing there?"

"Not long." She indicated the twins, "How long have they been there?"

He glanced down at the blond and brown heads; both nestled snugly in his robes. "A while, I think." Flicking his eyes up at a flashing light, he rose slowly, careful not to wake his children. 'We're coming up on Corellia.' He glanced at the twins; "You'd better take these two."

"Corellia? Why did you take us here?" Padme took the children, and sat behind her husband, watching as he manipulated the controls skilfully.

"Good junkyards." He grinned at her, 'I'll be able to get my hands on parts for a ship pretty quick, then we'll be gone.' The smile faded slowly, "Palpatine's probably closed all my accounts, so I'll need to get a job…"

"I'm not broke, you know." Padme shook her head, mildly amused.

Anakin blushed, "Sorry, I guess I'm used to flying solo. Do you have enough to get decent parts?"

“Yes, but why not just get a whole ship?”

Anakin waved his hand in dismissal “Rip-offs, trust me. We can get a better deal with parts.”

“But we’ll be in one place longer. Palpatine could track us down.”

Anakin looked as if he would argue for a moment, then appeared to reconsider and nodded quickly. “True.” A small smile quirked his lips, “You gonna argue with me about the ship design, too?”

Padme smiled as she heard the Imperial accent in Anakin’s voice falter, giving way to the more familiar accent of Rim-worlders. “Not unless you make me. Now come on, let’s get out of hyper before we crash into the planet.”

Leia stirred in her arms as Anakin continued to work the ship’s controls, waking her brother. Luke grumbled in baby talk and scowled at his twin. His mood changed when he saw hyperspace vanish and the stars appear. He cooed at the big planet before him, eyes going wide with delight. Suddenly, though, his happy mood vanished and changed to one of concentration.

Padme, realising what was coming, snickered under her breath, eyes sparkling.

“Why don’t I like the sound of that?” Anakin settled the ship into orbit and turned around slowly, as if apprehensive.

“Here,” Padme handed Luke to his father, and took Anakin’s other hand, “it’s time you learned.”

“Learned what, exactly?” Anakin sounded cautious, as if instead of Luke, Padme had placed a bomb in his arms. But Padme didn’t answer, placing Leia down and rummaging through a pile of clean rags. Selecting one, she scrutinised it before nodding and giving it to Anakin. She lead them into a ’fresher, and turned around, barely controlling laughter.

“What’s going on?” Anakin bent over his wife, watching her fold the cloth strangely.

She turned to him; “These are clean, right?”

“Yeah, sure. Why?”

“Go get two safety pins.” Frowning, Anakin placed Luke down carefully then went off in search of what she needed. Finding them easily, he came back.

“Here you go.” Anakin made as if to hand them to her, but she held up a hand.

“Nope, it’s your turn.”

“For what?” Suddenly he made a face, ‘What in the name of the Force is that *smell*?’ Freezing in place, he turned slowly to Padme, who was whooping in laughter. “No, no way, uh-uh. Sorry, Pad, I’m a Sith Lord.”

“So?” Padme laughed at the expression on his face.

“I don’t do *diapers*!”

“Ohhh, yes you do.”

“I’m a Sith!”

“Yeah, well, Your Sithiness, in case you haven’t noticed, you’re also a father.” She smiled sweetly ‘That means you’re going to change your son’s diapers.’ She chuckled, “Don’t worry, it’s not that bad.”

“So, how exactly do you change… diapers?” Anakin closed his eyes, accepting the inevitable.

A few minutes later, Anakin looked sick.

He glanced at Padme, who was sitting off to the side, “How big is Luke?”

“Why?” She frowned

“Because I’m pretty sure this thing’s bigger then he is. When are they going to be house-broken?”

“Potty-trained, Anakin. With intelligent species it’s called potty-trained.”

“Yeah, whatever. When?”

“Soon enough, don’t worry.” She stood up when Anakin stepped back. “Not bad, Your Sithiness. I’d say I can leave thins job with you from now on.”

He paled, looking like he was going to hurl, and she laughed, “I wouldn’t do that to you, Ani. We’ll split it.”

He sighed, relieved. “And this?” He gestured at the… used… diaper.

“We’ll dump it with the rest of our garbage.”

He snickered, “Pity, it would have made a great missile for Palpy.”

Should I continue? REVIEW!!!!!

Changing Fate - part 4

4

“This is Corellia, Luke.” Anakin whispered to his son as they walked along hours later. Luke giggled and squirmed in Anakin’s arms, trying to climb onto his shoulders. Clambering up to his new perch, Luke studied the new landscape. Anakin felt himself suddenly grow very cold, despite Corell’s warmth. Luke, with his fledgling abilities in the Force, must have felt the sudden caution in his mount and stayed very quiet. Anakin brought Luke down again, securing him in his arms; then ducking his head, he retreated to the safety of a nearby alley. Luke shivered with the sudden disappearance of the sun, but other then that was still. Anakin glanced at the buildings on either side of him and noted where the windows were placed. It was a long jump, but he could make it. Backing a little farther away from the mouth of the alley, he tensed his legs, preparing to jump.

“There he is!” Anakin spun around to face the stormtroopers he had sensed, and tried not to moan.

An entire legion of the Emperor’s brainwashed servants crowded around the entrance to the alley.

Backing away slowly, covering Luke with his cloak, he faced them. A snarl curled his lip as the dark forces took hold of his body. The troopers fired using stun bolts, tranquilizer darts, and other weapons. Anakin laughed at their pathetic efforts; did they really think they could stop a Sith if he didn’t want to be stopped? Luke began to whimper, the sound muffled by the robes covering his face, but unlike before, Anakin couldn’t be brought to his senses so easily.

He lashed out at the troopers, kicking, punching and generally doing enough damage for three strong — and armed — beings. The white-armored troops fell back, amazed by this fierce assault. One rushed him, but a roundhouse kick knocked him back into another taking aim with his tranquilizer gun.

Clenching his hand into a fist, he crushed half of the offending troopers’ blasters, the other half got their ammunition deflected back at them. Anakin was nearly insane with rage — completely intoxicated with the Dark Forces he was employing. He snarled at a trooper fool enough to *try* attacking him, knocked him out of the fight, and snarled at his friend, who was coming to the first trooper’s aid.

Anakin pushed the attacking troopers back, screaming his rage. So consumed was he — so focused on his task of ripping apart his master’s servants — that he didn’t notice the two troopers behind his until it was too late.

The two troopers with ysalamiri on their backs.

Anakin felt the world grow strangely dim, heard Luke’s wail of confusion, turned around with reflexes slowed as if he was swimming in molasses.

Then a blue bolt struck him, and he knew no more.

Padme looked with distracted interest at the ships in the used ship lot. Nothing worth buying here, just like in all the other lots she'd seen that day. She sauntered out into the street, slowing down a beat when she felt something distinctly *wrong* taking place. She couldn't have explained it to anyone, but she knew that something wasn't right.

Leia stiffened in her arms, her small face draining of colour. She whimpered a few times, clinging tightly to her mother. Padme frowned, but whispered soothing words to her, unsure of what was causing this sudden fear.

Leia began to sob, crying out her despair and hugging her mother fiercely.

"It's okay, Leia. What's wrong, little princess?" Padme felt her face grow as white as her daughter's.

Anakin… Luke, it could only be them. They were in danger!

She slipped past the other beings on the sidewalk and headed towards her ship as fast as she could without attracting too much attention. Turning a corner, she saw an army of stormtroopers marching toward what looked to be enough shuttles to house all of them. Her eyes widened and she ducked back into the shadows that concealed her.

The wail of a baby caught her attention, a terrified and angry sound.

A very familiar wail.

"Luke!" She whispered, devastated, as she saw the trooper carrying him toward a shuttle. She wanted to run to him, to calm him, to tell him that everything would be alright… but she couldn't, for Leia's sake, and it broke her heart. She closed her eyes, trying to think of how in space she was going to get him free.

Where's Ani???

"DA!!" Luke screamed, and Padme jerked her head up, as much in surprise at the word as sudden fear for her husband. She spotted him quickly, being carried by two troopers, one under each arm. Luke screamed as he saw his father being carried to a different shuttle, and Padme could bear no more. Turning away, sick in mind and heart, she ran away from her son's cries.

I need help for this… Creeping into what looked to be an abandoned building; she climbed up a level and activated the tiny portable comm she carried everywhere.

Punching in the code, assured long ago that this was a secure channel, she bit her lip and waited.

An image blossomed into the air, flickering when the tiny holoprojecter in the comm strained it's tiny circuits.

"Obi-Wan? It's Padme… I need your help." She looked down as she related her story to him, the looked up, as if she was expecting him to log off or stay silent.

He did neither, just sighed and looked tired "Are you sure Anakin is back with us?"

"Yes," She didn't hesitate with this answer, "he fought them, that much I know. Palpatine isn't letting him get away, I don't think this is a trap—"

“That isn’t what I asked, Padme.” His blue gaze didn’t waver “I asked if Anakin is true to the light again.”

Padme studied her shoes “Well… most of the time. He has relapses, when the Empire was chasing us, for instance, but he was brought out of it by Luke. He loves his children, Obi-Wan, he would never hurt them, or me.”

“I know.” Obi-Wan sighed again, weary of all the war, all the deaths “I will come, but Padme, if I find him to be dark, I may have to restrain him or—”

“You will do no such thing, Knight.”

“Padme, he is a danger when he is like that.”

“Not to me!”

“But to others; you must admit that.”

“I won’t allow you to hurt him.”

“Do you think I want to hurt him?! Force, Padme, he was like my son! My brother! I…” he pulled in a long breath, “I will not hurt him unless it is absolutely necessary, I give you my word.”

Padme nodded slowly, “Very well.” Fear made her stomach roll, “Do you have any idea where they will take them?”

“Yes, there is only one reasonable choice. Coruscant.”

“Get here soon, Obi-Wan.” She looked away, “I don’t want them to be in Palpatine’s bony fingers any longer then they have to.”

He nodded and broke the connection. Padme looked at Leia, who was sitting on the dusty floor with tears in her big brown eyes.

“We’ll get them back, Leia.” Padme felt tears of her own sting her eyes.

We’ll come for you, Ani. Don’t give up.

Like it? Let me know!

By the way, The Other Side II — part 3 is up, go check it out. If you have NO idea what I’m talking about, go read my fic, The Other Side.

Thanx!

Changing Fate - part 5

5

Anakin awoke cold and cramped. The cramped part he could understand — he was in a very tiny cell. It was so tiny, in fact, that his knees were almost pushed against his face. He had woken up before, in a small shuttle, but had been quickly stunned. He was obviously in another ship, most likely a Star Destroyer, and he wondered whether Luke was in a cell close by.

He smiled weakly, looking around his cell. *Welcome to The Lifestyles of the Sith! Here we have Darth Vader's room, isn't it lovely? To your left you will see a lovely grey/black wall, and to your right… another wall! Right here, we have what looks to be a door of some sort, although it could pass for a wall. And if you'll look to the back, you'll see the luxury 'fresher!..No, sorry… it's another wall. Well… this is poodoo, isn't it? I don't even have a toilet…*

He groaned and struggled to his feet, realizing that his feet were tightly manacled to the wall. He shook the pins and needles out of his limbs and stretched out his arms, leaning his head back…

ZAP!

Anakin started in surprise as the ceiling gave his hands and head a sharp jolt of electricity. He glared at the ceiling for a moment and sat down again. He reached out for the Force and felt a cold nothing. Hey… why was he so cold all of a sudden..?

A freezing cold draft blew through the cell, making Anakin shiver. He scowled, *I hate the cold!*

He turned his head and saw the vent that was wide open, giving the frigid air access to the cell. The temperature in the cell plummeted, turning Anakin's breath into white vapor before his eyes.

He had been cold before… but never *this* cold!

He began to shake uncontrollably; all too aware of the pitiful protection his clothes gave him. Setting his back to the vent, he covered his head with his arms, burying his face in his knees.

He could only hope Luke was getting better treatment then this…

Luke woke up with a sleepy baby-yawn. He looked around the big room with large blue eyes. This wasn't the pretty place! The place were Da had taken him had those tall things… the things that were nice to sit under. The One who smelled nice had taken him to a place where there were lots of the tall things…

"Luke, look at this one!" the One who smelled nice smiled at him and took him over to a tall thing.

“This is called a Maple Tree, and in the fall, it’s leaves turn red or yellow. I’ll take you here then, Luke. It’s beautiful.”

Luke gurgled and batted at the funny shaped thing that hung from the… what had the One who smelled nice called it? Oh, a tree. It was pretty.

Luke grasped the bars on the small crib and decided to find Da. Maybe he was just outside.

Luke and Leia had long ago figured out how to open the crib when they wanted to get out, so Luke let the bars come down and jumped out of the crib. Walking over to the big door at the front of the room, Luke bumped into it. He frowned, usually these things opened when he did that! Then he saw the small panel that flashed. He backed up, eyeing the panel, then ran back to the crib. Grabbing a soft brown creature with a hard nose, he dragged it after him. He looked at the panel again, then hurled the creature at it. The creature hit the panel, and the door swung open.

Stepping out into the hall, Luke hesitated. How was he going to find Da? Crying usually worked when a grown-up was nowhere to be found, but somehow Luke knew he shouldn’t do that just now. So he set out down the hall, looking into rooms or down corridors.

Sometimes big people in white suits came down the halls, but whenever they looked towards Luke, he pretended he was invisible. The white people would shake their heads, sometimes mumble to themselves, but would never come near him.

After another search of a big room with lots of boxes Luke frowned. This place was big, how was he going to find Da? He moved back into the hallway, then the hallway changed from having no people to having *lots* of people. All the doors were closed, and there were cameras and blasters everywhere. Suddenly he passed a closed door that seemed cold… but also seemed very *right*.

Luke stopped and looked at the door. Could Da be in *there*? In that cold room?

Why not?

Luke threw his faithful brown creature at the blinking panel and the door slid open. Retrieving the brown creature, Luke looked into the cell.

Da sat there, shivering, his skin a funny colour.

“Da!” Luke threw himself at the shaking man, hugging him tightly.

“L… L… Luke?” Da looked up at Luke, his eyes wide with surprise. Luke grabbed one of the tall man’s hands and was surprised at how cold it was. He tugged at it, trying to get its owner to move. He tugged harder, then stopped when he saw the big shiny red mark on the larger hand.

Luke’s anger rose; who had hurt Da?

“Luke, calm down, I’m okay.” Da swallowed, “But you have to go. Run, Luke!” Luke shivered; feeling the *really* cold air hit his skin.

“Da?” Luke presented his best puppy-dog face and didn’t let the older man push him out.

“Luke… please… you can’t stay with me. I can’t protect you like this.”

Luke frowned; didn't Da know he couldn't leave? He *had* to stay with Da! It was just something he *felt*.

Luke shook his head, and heard his father groan.

Anakin sighed at Luke's defiance, then frowned. "Luke," he asked slowly "how did you get in here?"

Luke smiled mischievously and held out a small teddy bear. The nose looked scratched, as if it had hit the wall numerous times.

Anakin laughed shakily, then felt an idea begin to form in his mind.

"Luke, is there another panel outside? One that you didn't push?"

Luke ran outside, took aim, and threw the teddy bear.

The Force came rushing back to the two Skywalkers, and Anakin sighed in relief. *Force, am I lucky that Luke catches on so quickly… he's so smart.* Fatherly pride flooded him as the thought the last part. The manacles snapped open as he prodded them with the Force, and he got to his feet shakily. Careful not to bump his head against the ceiling, he crept out of the cell and scooped up his son. Luke cooed and snuggled contentedly against his chest. Shielding himself against the eyes of the stormtroopers and the cameras, he crept out of the detention ward.

He was almost at the hangar when a voice grated out behind him; "Did you truly think you could escape me so easily?"

Anakin turned slowly, "No, but there's no harm in hoping."

Palpatine laughed softly, "You have an intelligent son, Vader, he will be welcome in my ranks."

"Leave him alone." Anakin's soft voice carried more menace then even Palpatine had ever heard in it "Take me, I don't care, but hear me, old man: leave my son ALONE."

"You dare threaten me, boy? You will pay most dearly." Palpatine's fingers arched in preparation for his favorite kind of torment.

"Luke," Anakin placed his son on the ground, pushing him lightly with his foot, "get behind me."

The two powers, light and dark, began their war.

Well??? I know it's kinda short, but if you review, more will come!!!

Oh, yeah, the next part of TOS II should come out soon, so keep your eyes peeled.

Changing Fate - part 6

6

Padme met Obi-Wan as he stepped out of his small ship. Swallowing back a mouthful of bile, she knew she didn't look that well. Neither did Leia, for that matter. Both of them were pale and wore expressions of sadness so powerful that passerby thought they had just come from the funeral of a loved one.

I might as well have come from a funeral, I know the chances of Anakin and Luke both *being alive, well, and intact are pretty slim. Leia, even though she doesn't know what is going on, knows that her brother is gone and can't understand why. I hope they're okay… Stars, let them be okay.*

"Padme, we must leave at once, we don't have much time to work with."

"What do you mean, Obi… Ben, I mean."

"It's alright, once we're in space you can call me by my true name." He looked around, glancing with concern at Leia's pale features. "She looks like she hasn't slept much. Is she okay?"

"Considering her brother and father have just been captured by a man who will torture them without a second thought, she's doing fine. A little loss of sleep is to be expected." She looked the general of the Clone Wars in the eye. "What do you mean by 'we don't have much time to work with'?"

"I'll tell you soon." He hustled her onto the ship and swept into the cockpit, lifting the ship off the ground in remarkable time. They broke atmosphere and danced around an Imperial patrol before slipping into the multi-coloured expanse of Hyperspace. Leia sighed and snuggled closer to her mother as Obi-Wan turned back to them. He frowned with worry at Leia's little body, "She should get some sleep. If you wanted, I could—"

"Trick her into sleeping? Thank you, but I think it won't be needed. She'll fall asleep when her body has had enough." Sure enough, Leia relaxed into Padme's arms and allowed sleep to claim her weary body.

Obi-Wan took Padme's free hand in his, looking at the gray deck of the ship as he tried to find words to explain the situation to her. "I felt a disturbance in the Force recently. I clearly felt Anakin and Luke; together they form a pattern so distinct and powerful in the Force that they are very hard to miss. I felt Palpatine nearby," he shivered then, his bones chilling with the remembrance of the Dark power "he, as well, creates a signature in the Force that cannot be duplicated." *It amazing that I did not feel him in the beginning…* Obi-Wan's thoughts trailed off as Padme's hand tightened on his own.

"Nothing that has happened in these past few years is your fault, Obi-Wan." Padme whispered fiercely.

“I wish I could believe that.” He waved off his morbid thoughts “It matters not. Palpatine will try to convert Anakin again; he doesn’t want to waste a powerful — and already trained — ally. He may be evil to the bottom of his black soul, but he has proven that he is not stupid. If I had to hazard a guess, I’d say that he’d separate Anakin and Luke, and play their feelings for each other against them. He’s done it before, he’ll do it again.”

“Does he know we’re coming?”

“He knows you’re coming most likely. He may overestimate my bitterness towards Anakin; then again, he may not.” Obi-Wan shrugged, “We’re going to need more people for this little rescue operation either way.”

Padme looked at him warily “Who did you have in mind, master Jedi?”

Obi-Wan grinned.

On a distant Star Destroyer, Anakin Skywalker fought for his life.

Blue lightning screamed at him, blocked barely two inches from his hands and thrown into the walls, the ceiling, the floor, and back at the man who had thrown it first. Anakin screamed a wordless battle cry and tried to push the malevolent power back, but only succeeded in exhausting himself more. Palpatine cackled and increased the power of his attack.

Luke cowered behind his father, too scared to even cry. He backed up a few small steps when Anakin was forced back again, scrambling to the wall.

“You see, *child*? If you used the power you once wielded so effectively, you could save yourself and your son. But you can’t, you are indeed pathetic. Little *slave*, you don’t even deserve the title of Padawan.”

Anakin screamed again, rage filling his body “You old decaying *parasite*…” He struggled forward, trying to get at the old man. His incredible anger blocked out all other senses.

“Little fool.” Palpatine chuckled darkly, easily blocking the young man’s attack and blasting him to the floor. “You think you can defy me?”

“You dried up piece of — AH!” Anakin writhed under the torture that Palpatine dished out.

“Enough of that, my young apprentice, there are children present.” Palpatine took on a mocking look of horror. ‘Oh, dear! That isn’t one of the *Royal Guards* holding your son, is it? My, my, you failed to protect your son!’ He shook his head sadly as Anakin struggled to get up and help the young one. “Not much of a father, are you?”

“Luke…” Anakin reached out with one battered hand to his son, who reached back to him. Palpatine smiled evilly as he altered this sight in Anakin’s young mind. Luke, in the arms of the red-clad guard, snuggling into the blood coloured robes. Luke, giggling up into the faceless mask.

Luke, looking over his fallen father, calling Palpatine “Da.”

Anakin cried out once, “Luke!!” before Palpatine knocked him unconscious with a carefully placed burst of lightning. Anakin slumped to the cold deck.

“Fool.” Palpatine turned to the guard holding the struggling child, “Take this one back to his room.” He patted the child on the head. Luke lunged and bit the pale hand.

“Little brat!” The Emperor snarled, then smiled as the anger boiled out of the toddler. “We will reach Imperial Center in three days. Wield this one’s door shut, and bring him out when we get there.” The guard bowed and walked of with the defiant child in tow.

Palpatine smiled wickedly then turned greedy eyes towards the child’s sire.

Like it? Hate it? Want me to keep writing? REVIEW!!!

Changing Fate - part 7

7

Anakin groaned as he woke from his forced slumber. His head lolled and he struggled to remember where he was. There was incredible pain in his arms and shoulders, and oddly enough, his feet didn't seem to touch the ground. How strange…

"Ah, good morning, Lord Vader." Palpatine's voice cackled. Anakin's head shot up, and he bared his teeth in an expression of pure and malevolent hatred.

"You… where am I? What have you done with my son?" Anakin looked around, suddenly recognizing the room that he was in.

An interrogation room. The place where beings were tortured until their wills gave out or their bodies gave in. HE was strung up in heavy chains, and the Force didn't seem to exist here. He looked down at his feet and saw that the toes barely touched the gray floor that was stained with many shades of dark red. Growing slightly ill at the sight of the stains on the floor, he lifted his eyes and glared at his captor.

"Your offspring is quite happy where it is, Skywalker, don't you remember?"

"That isn't true, and if you think that I'll be driven into despair because of a false image you need to have your head examined."

"Ahh, young blood burns so hot in its veins." Palpatine shook his head in mock sorrow. "You need a lesson in manners, child."

"I quiver in fear."

"You'll be doing much more then that when I get through with you, I assure you."

"Your overconfidence is your weakness." Anakin snarled.

"Your faith in your endurance is yours." Palpatine's good mood suddenly evaporated and he spat at the chained Jedi. 'You seem to forget that I was making people beg for mercy at my hands while you were being potty trained.' The snarl disappeared, and the confident smile returned. "No matter, you will find that you have a breaking point, just as everyone else does. I don't believe being fatherless has changed that, do you?"

Anakin lunged for him, jerking his arms back when he used up all the slack in his chains. His shoulders screamed in protest and the chains rasped in sympathy with them. His body jerked to a stop, but still continued to strain at the chains. Blue eyes blazed hatred at the yellow ones that were only inches away. Palpatine smiled mockingly, and Anakin snarled his defiance. Palpatine laughed at this futile display and patted Anakin's cheek.

"Oh, little Jedi, I will enjoy seeing you regret every sound you make now. Before my minions and I are done with you, this chamber will run red with your blood and you will beg me to serve me again. I'll make you forget what it is to be rebellious and defiant. Oh, and

Anakin," Palpatine added in a secretive whisper, "if you manage to hold on to your spirit and your sanity, don't worry, I still have your son."

He laughed loudly as he strode out the door, drinking in Anakin's screams of hate.

Obi-Wan sat in deep meditation, questing for Anakin's presence. He hadn't told Padmé that when he had sensed Anakin last, the man had been in deep pain. Obi-Wan didn't trust Anakin, not yet, but Padmé seemed to think that there was hope, and for her sake he would believe it.

But he couldn't believe it in his heart of hearts. He had just been betrayed one too many times.

Qui-Gon, master, where did I go wrong with the boy? He was always so smart and so kind, when did the impossible happen? When did that little boy that I so loved disappear?

Obi-Wan sighed at the lack of response. Many times like this he had cried out for the wisdom and compassion of his beloved master, but Qui-Gon had yet to answer him. That didn't stop him from trying, however.

He sighed again, and reached out for his former Padawan. *Anakin…*

Nothing. The bond had been severed completely… or had it? Obi-Wan reached out again, trying to find some small filament of the strong bond they had once shared.

Nothing… but wait… THERE! It was microscopic, but it was there. Obi-Wan hesitated, not wanting to have to face another betrayal, but then reluctantly followed the hair thin link to Anakin.

Anakin, are you there?

AHHHHHHHH!!!!!

Anakin!!! Pain flared along the bond, and Anakin's screams grew louder. Obi-wan forced himself past the barrier of incredible pain and looked through Anakin's eyes.

An interrogation droid… it came closer and there was pain. No sound came from Anakin, and Obi-wan realized that his screams were only mental. Anakin was far too proud to scream and show his pain.

Obi-Wan tried to touch the tormented spirit, but a burst of unimaginable pain cut him off. He gritted his teeth and tried again.

Anakin, can you hear me?

Come to gloat over my suffering, Obi-Wan? Or to sigh and tell me that you told me so? Anakin's tone was strained and bitter.

I have come to do neither, Anakin; I merely want to help you.

I'll believe that when I see it, old man.

You will get that chance soon. Tell me where you are.

Why? Now, the tone changed to real curiosity.

Because we're coming to get you and Luke.

We?

Padmé, Leia, and myself.

There was a pause, then a grunt of pain. *You're bringing my daughter, are you mad?*

No, I assure you, I'm quite sane. Leia is our best way to find Luke.

If she is hurt, Kenobi, dark side be damned, I'll kill you myself.

I begin to wonder how Padmé saw the light in you at all.

Kenobi, I'm currently under torture, you cannot expect me to be at my best. A soft cry followed this statement. It was becoming obvious that Anakin was falling toward unconsciousness, his mental words softer, slurred like a drunken man's.

I can understand that, old friend. Tell me where you are.

Coruscant, somewhere in the Imperial Palace. There's a Ysalamiri in my cell.

If there was, I wouldn't be able to contact you, Anakin. They lied.

They took it out of my cell so that Palpy could shoot some of that weird lightning stuff at me. Ever had it done to you?

I have to say that I've never had the pleasure.

Hope that you never do. It hurts like you wouldn't believe, and it doesn't stop. Another cry of pain. *Listen, Kenobi, if you can't get me out of here, just get Luke out and go. Leave me.*

Sith-Hell I will.

Just do it, I don't give a pound of bantha poodoo what you think of it. The blasts of pain were fading now, growing farther away. Obi-Wan envisioned Anakin's head beginning to loll from side to side.

Obi-Wan?

Anakin?

Keep my family safe for me… The connection was cut suddenly, as Anakin's body gave out from the pain.

Obi-Wan rose from his position, breathing deeply. Striding into the cockpit, his went over to the comm console and opened up a channel.

"This is *Knight's 'Saber* to the vessel *Nubian Pride*. General Panaka, General Tarpals, we must move quickly. Let's get this rescue on the road."

"Yes sir." Panaka's voice was familiar over the comm system. "Alright people, let's haul jets. We have a Skywalker and a Skycrawler to get back."

Changing Fate - part 8

8

Emperor Palpatine sat in his favorite throne, drumming his thin, pale fingers. Closing his eyes, he immersed himself in the destruction and utter chaos of the Dark Side. Screams of anger and terror surrounded him, and Palpatine felt himself smile, or at least felt the muscles in his cheeks twitch, pulling his lips back. He opened his eyes again, and turned his throne to gaze upon the durasteel monument of his power.

Imperial Center stretched out beneath his circular window, stretching to the horizon in all directions. Skyscrapers competed with each other for space, and small craft wove between them, fluid lines of light.

All of this was his, his to rule and command, his to dominate. To think, the Jedi could have had all this, in all it's magnificent glory, but chose instead to serve! They could have ruled the way Palpatine ruled now, but chose instead to become little more then glorified policebeings. Such wasted potential…

The slight swoosh of his private elevator pierced Palpatine's thoughts, forcing him out of his Dark musings. The swoosh was followed by the clicking of marching boots, and then the sounds of a scuffle.

Speaking of the Jedi…

There was a crack, and the sounds of struggle abruptly ended. Boots clicked their way up the stairs to the throne, and Palpatine smiled again. There was a thump, as though something heavy had just been dropped on the floor.

Silence reigned for a few minutes, and then Palpatine spoke, "Leave us."

Boots clicked away, and faded into nothingness, and Palpatine turned around in his throne again.

Anakin Skywalker lay on the cold floor, curled up in a fetal position. His clothes were ripped and the skin that was visible to Palpatine's calculating eye was bloody. A gash had been opened from above Anakin's right eye to his mid right cheek, just on the cheek bone. That gash was deep, and would most likely leave a scar. The eye in the middle of the rip, however, was undamaged. The boy stirred — nothing could keep the Chosen One out for long, Palpatine mused — and his eyes slowly fluttered open. He put a hand on the floor and raised himself up; shaking slightly from the strain put on long restrained muscles. He let out a slight grunt as his muscles spasmed.

How the proud do fall, Palpatine chuckled inwardly. A wicked smile pulled at his thin, pale lips, and he made a slight motion with his right hand.

Anakin fell, his supporting hand knocked away from under him. His head hit the floor with a dull thud and a hiss of indrawn breath. He lay there for a moment, breathing deeply, trying

to control the waves of pure hate that were coursing through his body. He raised himself up again, growling.

Palpatine smiled and knocked him down. This was an old game, but one that Palpatine never tired of. Anakin would soon realize that the Dark Force could salvage his dignity, and save him, but until then…

Anakin got up…

15 minutes later

Palpatine let out a sigh of annoyance; this was getting boring. Yes, this game was fun, and Palpatine did enjoy knocking the arrogant Jedi down, but Anakin didn't *react*. Didn't react with anything else then a growl or grunt and a surge of tightly controlled hate, at least. That hate was good, but the proud Jedi needed to unleash that hate. The Darkness was so close to claiming Skywalker again…

"Getting tired of this yet, Jedi?" Palpatine taunted Anakin, his voice sharp and cruel.

"No, why? Don't you have anything better to do, Senator?" Anakin's voice was weak, hoarse, but mocking. There was nothing bitter about his statement. "Or have you lost your creativity? Perhaps it decayed along with the rest of your body."

Oh, bad move, child. "Oh, I can be creative, boy. I merely wished to stop you from untold years of agony."

"Again, I quiver in fear."

"Bravado is all well and good, but I will remind you that I know you have your limits."

Anakin doggedly pushed himself up again, meeting Palpatine's gaze coolly "You've been at this for what, two months? *I'm not going to break for you*."

Palpatine sighed, seemingly disappointed, but inside he was jumping with glee. "So be it, boy." A cold smile, dark as the night in a Naboo swamp crossed his lips. "However, there are other ways that you can serve me, rather than being my ally." One pale hand shot out, faster than a snake's strike, snapping a metal collar around Anakin's bruised and battered throat. He retreated before Anakin had a chance to attack, stepping back a safe distance.

Anakin reached up, eyes widening with surprise — but not comprehension just yet — and touched the smooth surface of the collar with one torn hand. A light started to blink as the collar was activated, and Anakin frowned as tiny needles inserted themselves into his neck.

"Skywalker, do try and catch this." Palpatine cackled as a large piece of equipment tore itself out of the floor and hurled itself at Anakin. Anakin glanced at the flying metal and Palpatine felt the first stirrings of the Force…

"AH!" Anakin tore at the collar at his throat, trying without success to rip it off. The equipment, unaffected by Anakin's attempts, flew toward the Jedi and hit him in the head.

Anakin fell to the floor, blood drizzling down his cheek, and Palpatine acted quickly.

He will yet serve me, though it is truly a pity that I will lose his tactical skills. Palpatine retrieved a small syringe from a hidden compartment in his throne, looking at the dark, toxic-

looking — and illegal — substance within. *The collar works well, and should not affect his heath the way the Ysalamiri do.* Indeed, if the furry lizard-like creatures stayed near Anakin for more than a day, he would start to fall apart… literally. His skin would gray, become dry and peel, and he would start to convulse. The medics didn't know what to make of it, but Palpatine had his suspicions. Anakin *was* conceived by the Force itself — if the prophecies were correct — and in it's absence, perhaps his cells… it was interesting, and warranted further study, but that was for later. *When he is mine without question, the collar will have to go. He is strong with only his muscles, but a Force-strong slave would be much better. That will not be for a while yet, I think. The fool, even if he doesn't know anything else, even if he is driven mad, he will know — as some others have — that I am the one who sealed him in his Hell. He will seek vengeance, and then he will be mine to mold. And then the son will soon follow, especially if I tell him that dear Obi-Wan and Padmé did this to* poor *Anakin.* Palpatine strode over to Anakin's large body, still prone on the floor, and kicked him lightly with one foot. When the blond man didn't stir, Palpatine knelt at his side and gently, almost tenderly, lifted his face and inserted the needle into the soft skin of the exposed throat. Anakin's throat twitched and his eyes fluttered open.

Anakin felt a sting on his throat; sharp against the dull throbbing that had invaded his head, clouding his thoughts. He opened his eyes, and recoiled at Palpatine's proximity. With the hated Sith so close, Anakin could barely restrain himself from lunging at the man (if you could still call him that…) and bringing all the might of the Force to bear on the man's decaying skull, and black brain. Palpatine stunk of Dark power, a smell like blood and heated metal, which left a horrible taste in Anakin's mouth. Palpatine reached out with one bony hand and grabbed Anakin by his short hair, lifting his head. Anakin surpressed a groan as a wave of dizziness swamped him. He reached out for the comfort and never-ending flow of the Force…

He jerked as pain erupted in his neck and ricocheted through his body. *It must be the collar… I can't touch the Force, at least, without feeling* that. *I've never seen anything like it… Well, I might as least try and show good ole Palpy I'm awake.*

"Why'd you wake me up? I was having such a good dream. We were at your funeral…" Anakin did his best to smirk at the hated face that was far, far too close. *Stars, I could be fifty klicks away and I'd still be too close…*

"Oh, I *do* apologize in that case, child. I merely didn't want to miss this."

"Mind if I ask what the stang you're talking about?"

"Watch your language." Palpatine's eyes flashed a warning.

"Hey, you know what? Bite me."

"Oh, I'm going to enjoy this…" Palpatine's eyes flashed with a maniac gleam.

"What—" Anakin was cut off in mid smart-ass remark as a wave of anger and fear rolled over him. *What???* Stars, bright yellow ones, began to fly around the ceiling. They turned into burning ghouls, screaming their rage. Anakin shook his head, and the world spun, turning crazy colours. Palpatine's face seemed to melt and the black of his robe mixed with the deathly pallor of his skin, which turned red… Then Darth Maul stood before him, looking as demonic as he had when Anakin had caught a fleeting glimpse of him, long ago. Anakin shut

his eyes, screwing them closed, then opened them. Palpatine stood before him again, looking gleeful.

"I see it works nicely." The old man's voice sounded like a tiger's satisfied growl, when it sees its prey is trapped.

"What did you do to me?" Anakin whispered, seeing the room spin again.

"I injected you with a drug called Black Hole. This, child is your new existence. Enjoy." Palpatine, his hand still grasping Anakin's hair, sent a surge of power into the Jedi's brain, sealing the drug there. Burning it into the young man's system. So far, no one had been able to escape its embrace.

Anakin's eyes widened, surprise, comprehension, and rage fighting for space in his mind. *I've seen people who had this done… oh, Force.* Emotions warred in him, a million choices of action playing before his eyes.

Be calm… be calm…

Run! Leave this behind you!

Screw this! Rip his bloody throat out!

One quickly won out.

With a deafening roar, Anakin launched himself at Palpatine, knocking the malignant ruler to the floor and grasping his throat with hands that were, in Anakin's vision, rapidly turning into claws. Palpatine sent a wave of Force lightning into the young man's body. Anakin went flying, but not before ripping a gash in Palpatine's face.

"You little bastard." Palpatine snarled, looming over the fallen Jedi.

Regaining for a moment a ghost of his former self, Anakin propped himself up and, ignoring the way the window behind the throne had turned into a mouth, calmly replied "Maybe so, but I bet you my dad could beat up your dad." The floor opened beneath him, and Anakin fell into blissful unconsciousness.

I know, I'm being really mean to him. I'm really sorry. Post reviews and I might just give poor Ani a break!

I NEED REVIEWS!!! cough, cough

Anyway…

Next chapter when I get enough reviews for this one! I just need to put the finishing touches on it. REVIEW!!

Have I mentioned that I like reviews?

Changing Fate - part 9

9

Deep in the bowels of the Imperial palace, where only the ghosts of the tortured roamed, it was peaceful. The dust that lay on the floor was undisturbed, and had been that way for months. No patrols passed by this spot, and no sound could be heard. A small rodent, perhaps looking for food, scurried across the dust-covered floor. It suddenly reared, hissed, and disappeared into whatever hole it had come from. A minute later, the wall the hungry rodent had been heading toward began to glow. Molten durasteel ran onto the floor, and pooled there. Black-clad figures leapt nimbly out of the hole, and landed soundlessly on the floor.

One, short and slender, turned to a taller companion, “I thought you said we had to hurry. Two months isn’t what I call hurrying.”

“We had no choice.” The companion, who spoke in an accented, masculine voice, answered. “This place is too well protected. We can’t just charge in. We can’t rescue anyone if we run into a trap.”

“You make the assumption that we still have anyone to *save*.”

“I haven’t felt them — either of them — die. Now, we have to be silent. We won’t exactly be welcomed with open arms if we’re seen.” The male waved to other unseen companions. “Alright, people. We’re going with an oldie but a goody. General Tarpals, take your group and head towards the north wing. Distract them there. While you’re doing that, General Panaka and his troops will head toward the east wing, where we suspect Luke is. Act like you are trying to get to where he’s being held. Padmé and I will take the underground tunnels and come from behind while they’re busy. Should either group take losses that seem to be too heavy, break off your attack. When you decide it’s time to leave, don’t worry about anything but getting out. Padmé and I must stay and look for Anakin. Any questions?”

“Yeah,” a young commando raised his hand, “with all due respect, General Kenobi, wherever Skywalker’s being held, it’ll be guarded well. Are you sure—”

“That we can get through the guards?” Obi-Wan smiled ‘No. But life is risk, and I will put no one in that kind of danger that I am not forced to.’ He looked around, seeing the different expressions of the commandos. Tense, expectant, grave, excited. *They’re all so young…* “Anything else? No? Good. Move out.”

Changing Fate - part 10

10

Dark things lurked in Anakin's mind; they prodded him, lured him, fueled him, and screamed at him with demon voices. Chained loosely to the wall, he howled back at them. Images from his deepest, darkest nightmares appeared before him and taunted him. There was nowhere to escape, for they followed him everywhere, even into the realm of sleep. Drained of energy, kept from his power by the collar around his throat, the portion of Anakin's mind that was still somewhat sane wanted nothing more than to curl up in a corner and die.

Maybe then the demons would leave him alone…

He roared, sounding like an enraged panthac, and lunged at the dark things before him. His chains brought him up short, but still he strained, voicing his rage at the images that vanished like mist before his eyes.

Deep in the palace, the roar was heard by two commandos.

"Stars… what was that?" Padmé whispered, glancing at her older companion.

"We probably don't want to know. Quiet, now, we're almost there." Suddenly, shots broke out somewhere ahead of them. "That's our cue. Let's go!"

They sprinted out into the corridor, and Obi-Wan ran to a nook, protected from blasterfire, Padmé hard on his heels.

"Get Leia!" Obi-Wan yelled, turning around to present his back to Padmé. On his back was a small piece of equipment that could easily be mistaken for a backpack. Padmé took off the top, revealing Leia's small face. Picking her up out of out of the sack, Leia looked scared, but there was something else on her features. Padmé prayed it was relief, that she could feel Luke.

"Leia," Padmé cried, "point to your brother! Where's Luke?" *Please, let her understand…*

Leia pointed one chubby finger at a door.

"Good enough!" Obi-Wan yelled, grinning. They scurried over to a door, avoiding the lethal bolts that were exploding all around them. Obi-Wan pounded on the admit button, and they jumped inside.

"Luke?" Padmé whispered in confusion. The room was empty.

"Looking for this?" The cackling tones made the whole party jump, just as Padmé realized that the corridor outside had gone deathly quiet.

"Palpatine!" Obi-Wan hissed, standing in front of Padmé and Leia, shielding them with his body and blade.

"Knight Kenobi, what a pleasant surprise. Your former pupil spoke very highly of you, back when he could speak coherently. I have long wished to meet you. And Senator Naberrie,

my, but that blaster suits you. Is that your daughter you hold? Charmed. As you can see, I've already met young Luke." He gestured to the boy who was squirming in his arms.

"Let go of my son!" Padmé said, her tone colder then the Hoth night, and twice as deadly.

"I will command, now, *Your Highness*. And I believe you are surrounded."

"Put your blaster down, Padmé." Obi-Wan murmured. He glanced at her, "This is but one battle in a war."

"How… philosophic." Palpatine revealed his damaged teeth with a sneer. "No matter. You wanted to see Vader, didn't you? Well, see him we will. I'm sure he'll be pleased to see you." Palpatine cackled with dark glee, and Obi-Wan and Padmé glanced at each other, both thinking the same thing.

I have a bad feeling about this…

Changing Fate - part 11

11

That was a really *stupid plan.* Obi-Wan thought darkly. *Did I really expect the Imperials to fall for it? I mean, Palpatine took over the Republic without a tremor in the Force to warn us. I should have…* A sharp prod with a blaster barrel cut the Jedi Knight from his musings.

"Move it, Jedi." A filtered voice rasped from the depths of the stormtrooper helmet. Obi-Wan glanced back, smiled mockingly, and continued walking.

Make one future, make another. Unmake one past, you cannot.

They stepped into a large turbolift, and it sped them up to the throne room. They stepped out into the room, and immediately registered the slight whimpering coming from one corner of the room.

"Where is my husband, Palpatine?" Padmé's voice was cold, but Obi-Wan could tell she was worried. Palpatine wouldn't have let them see Anakin if he wasn't under complete control.

"Don't worry, Senator, you will see him soon enough." Palpatine let out a cackling laugh and took a seat in his throne. The royal guard made as if to give Luke to him, but Palpatine waved him off. Luke struggled to escape the red robed guard, but was firmly restrained.

The whimpering grew louder, and Obi-Wan could see that it was coming from the wall. He drew back a little, and looked at Padmé. Padmé swallowed and glanced back at him. What was Palpatine hiding?

"Guards, fetch Lord Vader." Palpatine gestured towards the wall that the whimpers were escaping from and five guards, armed with force pikes gathered around it.

"You may want to watch this, your highness, Jedi." The stormtrooper marched them closer to the throne, and they saw the outline of a hidden door on the wall.

"Now."

The guards raised their pikes and one of them keyed open the door. The whimpering instantly turned into inhuman howling and snarling. The rattling of chains was heard, then there was a crunch, as though the chains had been ripped out of the walls. A dark missile hurtled through the door, trying to claw it's way to freedom. The guards struck at it, savagely beating it down with their weapons. The shape gave one last mournful howl and fell to the floor.

The guards picked up the pathetic form and dropped it at Palpatine's feet.

"Anakin!" Padmé gasped in horror, stumbling backwards.

"Guards, I have him under control. Leave us." The guards left, one of them placed Luke on the other side of the throne, away from his father. Luke scrambled over to Padmé and Leia,

clutching his mother's leg.

Palpatine smiled down at the unconscious man at his feet and gave a tug on the chain that attached to a collar on Anakin's throat. Anakin twitched and whimpered like a wounded animal. His eyes fluttered open and he curled up tightly, as though hiding from something only he could see.

"Do get up, Lord Vader. I believe your behavior is scaring our guests." Anakin twitched at Palpatine's voice. Palpatine pointed a finger at him and hissed, "Obey me."

Anakin pushed himself up and rose to his feet. Obi-Wan drew back at the look in Anakin's eyes. They were empty, lost, terrified, enraged, and insane. How two eyes could convey so many things, Obi-Wan wasn't sure, but all of them were there. There were infected cuts all over him, the worst of which was a deep gash that had nearly taken out his eye; as it was, the eye was swollen shut. His clothes were tattered and dirty, and it was obvious that he hadn't bathed in a long while.

"Oh, Anakin…" Padmé murmured, fear and compassion warring on her features.

"Your husband does my bidding now." Palpatine bared his teeth "Would you like a demonstration?"

"No, we'll take your word for it." Obi-Wan muttered.

Palpatine laughed, "You shall have one anyway." He turned to Anakin, who was cringing away from something. "Kill Kenobi. Now!"

Anakin turned towards Obi-Wan, and Obi-Wan didn't see a spark of the Anakin he had once known. Anakin lurched towards him.

"I will not fight, Anakin."

"He can't understand you, Jedi." Palpatine cackled from his throne.

Anakin moved swiftly, then, knocking over Obi-Wan and closing his hands on his throat.

"Anakin! No!" Padmé cried, setting Leia down, and taking a step towards the two men.

Obi-Wan tried to pry Anakin's hands off his throat with no success. He lashed out and caught Anakin on a large gash on his thigh. Anakin screamed and clutched at the wound. Obi-Wan rolled away from him, called his lightsaber to his hand and brought the hilt down on Anakin's head.

Anakin fell with an anguished whimper.

"Anakin!!" Padmé ran towards them. Suddenly she screamed and fell; writhing from the blue lightning that surrounded her.

"You have disrupted my entertainment, Senator. I am most displeased." Palpatine rose from his throne and stepped around the now wailing twins. "I will deal with you, Jedi, in a moment." He forced Obi-Wan to his knees with a gesture, and took the lightsaber from his hand. Obi-Wan let out a cry and tried to get to his feet. Palpatine lit the saber and prepared to stab.

"Fare thee well, Senator!" The lightsaber came down…

Authors Note: What? Ducks thrown objects Alright! Alright! If you don't want a cliffhanger like that, **scroll down for the rest of the chapter**! Geez!

But before it landed, Palpatine was knocked over by a snarling beast of a man. Anakin leapt at him again, gripping the lightsaber and slowly… inch by inch… turned it back on its owner. Palpatine gave a wail as the saber landed its deathblow…

And then he exploded.

The burst of the Dark Side knocked Anakin back into the throne, knocking it off its base. He lay there for a moment, then crawled…

Straight over to Padmé.

"Anakin..?" Padmé reached out to caress Anakin's battered face, but he twitched away. Padmé turned her head away; almost afraid to see such weakness in the man who had once been so strong.

"Pa… Pa… Padmé?" The word came out hoarse and weak, and sounded as if Anakin was unsure if that was her name. She turned back, startled, and saw the pain in his eyes.

But behind it, growing stronger every minute, was recognition. He wasn't sure yet, but he *thought* he knew this woman. His heart felt funny, like it was growing two sizes too big. He knew one thing, however: the demons were quiet when he was with her.

"Anakin." Padmé smiled, and felt tears running down her face.

"I… love… you?" Anakin rasped, gasping for breath that didn't seem to come. The world spun… he dimly heard Padmé call his name… and everything went black.

Changing Fate - part 12

12

The Emperor was dead, his empire reeling in shock, and his capital was in chaos. In the mayhem of ships clawing for space, no one noticed the small freighter that slipped through and fled to hyperspace.

Obi-Wan sighed in relief as the stars lengthened and blurred. He slowly raised himself to his feet and walked back to the small cabin where Anakin lay.

Padmé knelt beside him, gently cleaning his face with a soft cloth. She looked up, and Obi-Wan could see the tears that lurked in the corners of her eyes. She wet the cloth again and dabbed it against the cut near his eye.

“How is he?” Obi-Wan inquired softly, knowing what he would hear, dreading it, but driven by the need for certainty.

Padmé shook her head slightly, one tear breaking loose, “He started having more trouble breathing a few minutes ago.” Padmé’s voice was deadpan, and she turned away to hide her misery.

“I found some bacta gel… it might do some good…” Obi-Wan looked down at his apprentice and tried to keep hope.

Padmé shook her head again, then gasped. Anakin twitched on the small cot, and his eyes fluttered open.

“Ani? Can you hear me?” Padmé reached down to stroke his face…

Anakin reared up, screaming and trying to rip apart everything in sight. Padmé jumped back with a cry of surprise and Obi-Wan grabbed Anakin’s arms, trying to pin him down. Anakin let out a blood-curdling scream, desperately trying to wrench his arms out of Obi-Wan’s grip.

“Give him a tranquilizer!” Obi-Wan roared, straining to be heard over Anakin’s screams.

“I can’t! We don’t know how strong he is! He could die!” Padmé attempted to hold Anakin’s legs down.

“Trust me; he’s plenty strong! Give him the tranquilizer!”

Padmé released Anakin’s legs and ran for the syringe of tranquilizer. Returning, she stabbed the needle into Anakin’s arm and forced the drug into his bloodstream.

When the needle pierced his arm, Anakin abruptly became coherent: “NO! No more drugs! LEAVE ME ALONE! I… Luke! LUKE!” The last word became a piercing shriek. The babble continued for a minute, rising up again to a scream. “LEAVE ME ALONE OR KILL ME DAMN YOU! Break… can’t break… I’m not going to… Padmé…” As the tranquilizer finally took hold of him, Anakin subsided with a whimper.

Obi-Wan finally let go of the limp arms and turned to Padmé once more. She was kneeling on the deck, her head in her hands, sobbing silently.

“He’ll be okay, Padmé.” Obi-Wan tried to comfort her but she pushed him away and shook her head.

“What did they *do* to him?”

“I don’t know.” Obi-Wan gave a sorrowful sigh.

“Can we at least get this *thing* off his throat?” Padmé reached for the collar.

“No.” He gently pulled her hand back ‘We don’t know of any security devices it might have programmed into it. Besides, it seems to be controlling his use of the Force. I don’t want Anakin, in his delirium to start twitching TK all over the place. He could be very dangerous.’ He tried to pull her to her feet, “I’ll show you where you can sleep.”

“No!” She pulled her hand away, “I want to stay here, he may need—”

“I’ll hook up a heart monitor and set it to give an alarm if he worsens.” He took her hand again, “You need to sleep, Padmé.”

She nodded, and with one more glance at Anakin, let Obi-Wan lead her out of the room.

Later in the night, the door to Anakin’s room opened again, to admit two more people.

Luke and Leia approached their father side by side and climbed up on his chest. Luke cocked his head and scowled at the leads attached to Anakin’s chest. He was about to rip them off when Leia tugged his sleeve.

She pointed to the heart monitor: “Quiet, you!” Then she nodded her assent to tug the leads off of their father’s chest.

Luke ripped them off with the relish of a toddler in his destructive phase. They waited for a moment, listening.

All was silent.

Leia stuck her tongue out at her brother. She frowned and peered closely at the collar around Anakin’s neck: “You, off!”

The collar clicked open and flew off of Anakin’s throat, which started to bleed in a few places.

Luke touched the cuts on his father’s neck: “Fix.”

They healed over without scars.

Now was the hard part. Luke looked up at his sister: *Bad stuff in Da’. Gotta get it out.*

Leia nodded: *Then Da’ okay?*

Luke grinned: *Yup.*

Together they touched their father’s battered head. He twitched but didn’t wake. Following the guide only they could see, they entered their father’s wounded mind and looked around.

Gotta find the bad stuff. Luke reminded his sister. He looked around, found a black part, and caught it. It dissolved at his touch.

Leia giggled, *Tag!* She chased after another black piece.

It became a game for the twins, chasing after black pieces and forcing them out of their father's mind and body.

When the game was over, the twins nodded at each other and left Anakin's mind.

Luke pushed himself to a sitting position and grinned at his sister. He turned around, "Da' fixed now?"

"Yes," The tall blue man who Luke could see through nodded and his eyes twinkled. "Good work, young Luke. You weren't bad yourself, Leia."

"Thanks." Leia slurred the word, making it come out 'tanks'.

The man gave them a smile and started to fade away, then stopped. "Luke?"

"Yup?" Luke looked up.

"Tell Obi-Wan that I can hear him, and that he never went wrong with Anakin. Tell him that for Anakin to survive this proves he did something very *right*."

"Okay, Mashtah Qui-Ga." Luke and Leia waved as their friend vanished.

Padmé got up early the next morning, planning on going to check on the twins. When she found two empty cots she gave a cry that sent Obi-Wan flying out of his cabin at a million miles an hour.

"Padmé? What is it?" Obi-Wan panted, his hair still mussed up from sleep.

"The twins! Where are they? Oh no…" Padmé moaned "They're with Anakin!"

The two set off at a dead run for Anakin's cabin.

"Luke? Leia?" Padmé sprinted through the door and came to a screeching halt about two metres in.

Luke and Leia were, once again, asleep on Anakin's chest.

Luke looked up sleepily, "Momma…" He smiled.

Obi-Wan crept closer to Luke and reached out a hand. "Luke," He said urgently "come with me. Get off your daddy."

Luke reared up indignantly "No!"

"Luke…" Obi-Wan's eyes widened as he saw Anakin's bare throat. "The collar…" Then he saw the leads for the heart monitor strewn all over the deck. "Oh, Stars!"

"Is he..?" Padmé whispered

"Da' sleepin'." Luke explained, smiling. 'Watch!' He patted Anakin's cheek softly, "Wake up, Da'!"

There was no movement from the form on the bed, and Padmé choked back a sob.

Then Anakin groaned loudly, earning a giggle from his two children. His eyes fluttered open…

“Da’!!” Luke hugged his father tightly, followed closely by Leia.

“Luke?” Anakin rasped “What…” Then his eyes found his wife, “Padmé?”

“Anakin?” Padmé inched forward, still cautious.

“Where am I?” Obi-Wan came into his view and he drew back. “Master..?” Anakin called tentatively.

Then he could speak no more, because he was being smothered by the bear hug Obi-Wan gave him.

An hour later, Anakin was eating a little, hearing the story of his rescue, and having two small children cling to him.

“Wow,” Anakin spoke between mouthfuls of bantha stew; “you guys spared no expense. After all I did to you, Obi-Wan…”

“It’s alright, Anakin. You’re back with us, that’s all that matters, I suppose.” Obi-Wan shook his head, “I thought I had done something wrong in your training…”

“No!” Luke spoke up, “You didn’t do nothin’ wrong. That Da’ survived said you did somethin’ *right*!”

“Luke?” Padmé asked incredulously in the silence that followed, “who said that?”

“Qui-Ga.”

“Who?” Anakin asked, mouth gaping open.

“Mashtah Qui-Ga!” Leia replied. She turned to Obi-Wan; ‘He can hear you.’ She made a face, “Said ’Tell Obi-Wan that the guidance that he needs is within, I can’t help anymore. Tell him that, if he looks, he’ll see that he doesn’t *need* my help.”

While Anakin and Padmé gaped at their three-year-old child, they heard a *Thump*.

Obi-Wan had passed out.

Changing Fate - Epilogue

Epilogue

The years passed, and Anakin healed. The progress was slow, and there was a fair share of tears and regrets, but the bond of love in the small family was strong.

Padmé helped to lead the senate, alongside Bail Organa, and was later elected as Supreme Chancellor. She — in the years after — was remembered for her strong will and sense of compassion. It was she who brought the Outer Rim territories under the Republic's wing and created stronger Anti-Slavery laws.

Obi-Wan rebuilt the Jedi Order, though he was far from alone. The Jedi Temple was rebuilt and students began to fill it once more. Yoda was convinced to come out of hiding, and with him came other Jedi who had escaped the purges. A new council began to form, and Obi-Wan and Yoda stood at it's head.

Luke trained under his father for years, but when he turned sixteen he was taken by Obi-Wan as a Padawan. Although he could never quite manage to beat his father in a spar or dogfight, he entered the Republic Navy as a pilot when he turned twenty-six. By that time, he was a Jedi Knight.

Leia also trained as a Jedi, although she stayed with her father as his Padawan. When she was eighteen, she started to get involved in politics, and her training was then split between her parents. When she asked her father over dinner why he didn't train her as a diplomat, Obi-Wan, who was also present, started laughing so hard he began to choke and had to be given the Hiemlich maneuver. Needless to say, Leia felt that perhaps it was better that her mother taught her the art of politics.

Anakin healed well, but was still scarred over his right eye. He helped Obi-Wan rebuild the temple, and they had their names engraved on the cornerstone. He trained his daughter as a Jedi until she graduated — much to his sorrow and pride — at twenty-five. He bullied Obi-Wan until the age of training for Jedi was raised and the initiates and Padawans had the option of visiting their parents. He stood by his wife as she was named Supreme Chancellor, and by his two children as they were Knighted. He also paced and stressed as two more children were brought into the world; a boy, named Kit, and three years later a girl, named Sabé.

A month after Yoda arrived on Coruscant, Anakin bumped into him — literally, he tripped right over him. When the laughter — and the apologies that immediately followed — ended, Yoda smiled.

"Wrong I have been, many times." The ears perked up and Yoda's eyes twinkled, "and wrong I will be again."

"Master Yoda?" Anakin smiled uncertainly, unsure what the green gnome was talking about.

“Right, Qui-Gon was.” Yoda bowed low, “Skywalker, the Chosen One you are.” He shuffled off, leaving a stunned Anakin in his wake.

Anakin was offered a position on the Jedi Council, but he refused. He stayed home with the new little ones, and more than once Padmé would come home to the scene of a food fight or see Anakin try to explain to three-year-old Kit how a hyperdrive worked.

The worlds turned, stars were born and died, and balance was finally regained.